

PRESS RELEASE

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FEDERAL JURY DECIDES ROUND ROCK MAN SHOULD BE SENTENCED TO DEATH

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona announces today that a federal jury decided that Lezmond Mitchell should be sentenced to death for the crime of Car Jacking Resulting in the Death of a 9 year old girl and her grandmother, both residents of Fort Defiance, Arizona which is within the confines of the Navajo Indian Reservation.

On May 8, 2003, Lezmond Mitchell, DOB 9/17/81 of Round Rock, Az, was found guilty by a Phoenix federal jury of one count of Car jacking Resulting in Death, two counts of Premeditated First Degree Murder, two counts of Felony First Degree Murder based on Robbery, one count of Kidnaping, one count Felony First Degree Murder based upon Kidnaping and two counts of Robbery and the related two counts of Using a Gun During the Robbery of a Trading Post. The conviction for Car Jacking Resulting in Death provided for a sentence of death or life imprisonment. After an aggravation/mitigation hearing on May 14-16, 2003, the jury deliberated and found that the defendant should be sentenced to death.

The evidence at trial showed that on October 28, 2001, 65 year old Alyce Slim and her 9-year old

granddaughter, Tiffany Lee left Fort Defiance, Az to meet with a couple of medicine ladies in New Mexico. Ms. Slim had a leg ailment and went to a healer in search of relief. Alyce and her granddaughter Tiffany met with the healer and headed home around 5:30 pm. They were never seen alive again. The worried family filed a missing persons report and started looking for the two.

On October 31, 2001, the Red Valley Trading Post, in Red Valley, Arizona was the subject of an armed robbery by three men wearing Halloween masks. The next day, November 1, 2001, the tribal police found a pickup truck in Red Valley Arizona and identified it as belonging to Alyce Slim. Criminal Investigators of the Navajo Department of Law Enforcement noticed there had been an attempt to burn the truck and later learned the attempt to burn the truck failed when the suspects closed the doors and windows which deprived the fire of oxygen.

On Friday, November 2, 2001, the FBI received a phone call from an individual who claimed to have information about Alyce Slim and her granddaughter. The individual advised the FBI that Lezmond Mitchell and another individual stole the truck from a lady and her daughter in the Window Rock, Arizona; used it to rob the Red Valley Trading Post; and attempted to burn the truck along the road near Tsaile, Az.

Based upon this information, Lezmond Mitchell was arrested on tribal charges. After his arrest, Mitchell assisted investigators in locating the victims. Mitchell admitted to the FBI that he and another individual had been picked up hitchhiking by an older lady and young girl. When she stopped to let them out, they took butterfly knives that they had obtained in Gallup, New Mexico and stabbed Ms Slim 33 times, according to the medical examiner. Ms Slim also suffered 16 incisions to her hands that were classified as defensive wounds. Mitchell also stated the grandmother's body was placed into the rear of the quad cab with the 9 year child. They drove into the mountains north of Tsaile, Arizona. The girl was removed from the vehicle. Mitchell confessed to an FBI agent that he slit the 9 year old girl's throat. When she wouldn't die he told her to "lay down and die." Mitchell and another individual retrieved two rocks that weighed

approximately 20 pounds apiece. Both threw the rocks at Tiffany's head. She was initially conscious but eventually died. The medical examiner determined that the cause of Tiffany's death was blunt force trauma to the head which resulted in six separate fractures of the skull and compared it to injuries one might receive after ejection from a high speed crash.

Mitchell drove away with the truck and hid it behind his grandfather's residence near Round Rock, Arizona. Later, they returned to the bodies of the grandmother and her granddaughter, chopped off their heads and hands and buried them in a hole. The bodies were stripped of their clothing along with other identifying information and burned in a fire.

According to Mitchell, the plan to rob the Trading Post was discussed the week before and it was decided that a get-a-way vehicle was needed. Mitchell traveled to Gallup, New Mexico for the purpose of stealing a truck. Mitchell admitted the grandmother's truck was used to rob the Trading Post. During the robbery, Mitchell was armed with a 12 gauge shotgun, Halloween masks were worn, and approximately \$5,000 was taken. The stolen money was eventually divided among Mitchell and two other individuals. The defendant remained in custody throughout the trial and sentence. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Mary H. Murguia. The counts of conviction and the maximum penalties are as follows:

Counts 1 and 5, Premeditated First Degree Murder of Alyce Slim and Tiffany Lee, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1111, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine or both

Counts 3 and 6, Felony First Degree Murder of Alyce Slim and Tiffany Lee, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1111, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine or both

Count 2, Car jacking of Alyce Slim and Tiffany Lee, resulting in their death in violation of Title 18

of the United States Code, Section 2219, which carries a maximum sentence of death, life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both.

Count 7, Kidnaping of Tiffany Lee, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1201(a)(2), which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both.

Counts 8 and 10, Robbery of the Red Valley Trading Post on October 31, 2001, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 2111, which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years, a \$250,000 fine or both. and

Counts 9 & 10 Using a Firearm During a Crime of Violence, Robbery, in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 924(c), which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Navajo Tribal Police Department, Criminal Investigators with the Navajo Department of Law Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Sentencing is set before Judge Murguia on August 4, 2003 at 10 a.m. The court is obligated by law to impose the sentence of death found by the jury.

The prosecution is being handled by Vincent Q. Kirby and Kurt M. Altman, both Assistant United States Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-01-1062-PCT-MHM
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